

The Robert A. Heinlein Centennial

July 5 to 8, 2007

The Centennial celebration of Robert A. Heinlein's birth took place in Kansas City over the period from Thursday July 5 to Sunday July 8, 2007, attended by about 750 members of the Heinlein community. The Centennial celebration was mounted by an *ad hoc* committee incorporated as Heinlein Centennial, Inc. It was our goal to bring together as many different facets of the Heinlein community in one place as could be managed, and we are happy to report a resounding success. The response of both the commercial and the government space community were very gratifying — and quite unlooked for.

The gala itself, preceded by a buffet dinner, took place on Heinlein's hundredth birthday, which he had thoughtfully scheduled to fall on Saturday in his centennial year — and as Peter Scott remarked "Heinlein also had the foresight to schedule his centenary before the economy went in the crapper."

That last is perhaps more than a throw-away joke in the opening years of the Greater Depression; you will find throughout the comments by organizers and attendees oblique references to financial crises and a fantastic degree of sabotage by the organization that should have been doing the Centennial but was not. Sketches of fuller tellings of the story have been archived on the Heinlein Nexus Forum but would overrun the space available in the JOURNAL. The remembrances of the participants are an *embarras de richesses*.

THE PROGRAM

THURSDAY JULY 5

Noon – 6:00 PM

SFRA Registration

3:00 PM – 9:00 PM

SFRA Sessions

5:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Centennial Event Registration

5:00 PM – 9:00 PM

Early Arrivals Reception

FRIDAY JULY 6

8:30 AM – 5:00 PM

Event Registration — Info Tables

9:00 AM – 5:00 PM

SFRA Sessions

9:00 AM – 11:00 PM

The "Critics Lounge" Social Hall — An entire room set aside for hanging out, socializing, and taking the weight off your feet with your fellow convention-goers.

10:00 AM – 11:00 AM

"Barsoom or Bust" (Robert James, Bill Patterson) — The influence of Edgar Rice Burroughs on Heinlein, his vision of Mars, and in particular, *THE NUMBER OF THE BEAST*.

COMMENTS BY ORGANIZERS AND ATTENDEES:

Early in 2009, Founding organizer of the Centennial, James D. Gifford, announced on the newly established Heinlein Nexus Forum that the Centennial's sponsoring organization, Heinlein Centennial, Inc., was winding up its affairs.

ROSIE P. (*Attendee*) — Just wanted to say a belated thanks to everyone involved in the Centennial. It was one of the best cons I've ever been to.

May I just also add my belated thanks for a *fabulous* weekend? I don't do cons much; this was my third maybe? ... I was convinced to go to the con by a friend on the now defunct Quotable Heinlein page who insisted that there will be other conventions, but never one devoted exclusively to Robert A.

I just walked around in awe. I loved the discussions, I loved talking to people, I loved looking up at the assembly after the banquet and realizing I was three empty chairs away from Spider Robinson. I just loved every minute; the hardest part was deciding between equally compelling discussions in the same time slot.

Really a wonderful job, all! Thank you again!

JACK KELLY (*Attendee*) — What I don't understand is this; I've been a Heinlein fan basically all my life. Even with the rise of Usenet and alt.fan.heinlein and the various organizations and websites that have come and gone over the past twenty years, I never got the impression that active Heinlein fandom was a very large group. I knew that Heinlein's influence on the U.S. space program was huge, because I work in that field, but in terms of avid fandom (or whatever you want to call it) I always thought we were a pretty small tribe. Or tribes, I should say — because Heinlein fandom has always been sort of ghetto-ized depending on what aspect of Heinlein's writing and philosophy you dig.

Commentary, continued

However, the Centennial really opened my eyes to the impact that this guy has had. To draw seven hundred paying guests from literally all walks of life, who all paid substantial amounts of money out of their own pockets to attend, not to mention the literal Whos-Who from academia, industry and government, was amazing. Thank you once again to everyone who thought this was important enough that they were willing to throw away their normal lives for two to three years to make this happen.

PETER SCOTI, *founding organizer*, replied: 'Thanks, Jack. The Centennial will always be something that no matter how badly I screw up everything else in my life, I will always be able to look back on with pride and fond memories.

The sons and daughters of Robert Heinlein are numerous and enthusiastic, they just aren't well organized. Buncha Loonies if you ask me. © In mounting HC we learned how he is revered by the private space community especially, which is why the space track was so prominent at KC. However, there aren't necessarily many reasons for Heinlein fans to congregate, because the reasons to do so are more or less limited to explorations of Heinlein's life and works, whereas what they really have in common is whatever particular legacy of Heinlein is the passion of their life. So the rocket jockeys would rather meet to talk about specific impulse than "The Man Who Sold the Moon," which they already know by heart anyway.

It's like having a fan community for Einstein — people everywhere are doing fantastic stuff with relativity, and know where it came from, but they don't need to spend a lot of time talking about its father.

TINA BLACK, *Facilities Coordinator* — I think that the bottom line is that I wanted one thing of the Centennial: I wanted it to be a fitting tribute to the life and work of Robert Heinlein . . . and I think all of us in the B and C cells shared that goal (Adam Selene was "A" Cell, so it goes without saying)

I honestly think we achieved that.

People who were not completely familiar with his works were going to miss things. The Centennial was built in part to carry echoes of personal experience to the people who attended.

In 1976, Robert Heinlein was the Guest of Honor at the World Science Fiction Convention in Kansas City. The first time I heard "The Green Hills of Earth," Ann Passavoy played and sang it for him at the end of the Masquerade intermission. The Centennial, being more science oriented, was pleased to have Jordin Kare, a physicist and music participant, sing the same song almost as a coda to the original performance I heard — I and many other Kansas City attendees. And a large number of people spontaneously joined him, because of all Heinlein songs, people who read all his work know that one.

PETER SCOTI *on the Kansas City site* — Like everything else, the location of the convention was not a foregone conclusion. Its origins go back to 2003, at which time I had been working on the notion of a centennial convention for the Heinlein Society for a year (note that the convention was not mounted by the Heinlein Society but by a completely different organization . . . a story for another time. But in 2003, it was still being explored by the Society.)

At that time, my thinking surrounding the location was that it should be a second-tier US city; second-tier because first-tier (e.g., New York, L.A., Chicago) convention facilities are prohibitively expensive and unnecessarily large for our purposes. Second-tier is like, say, Seattle, Portland, New Orleans, Kansas City . . . no slight intended if any felt. Seattle was in the running because of the Science Fiction Museum. Kansas City was in the running because of the birthplace. Locations near Heinlein connections in Hollywood, Colorado Springs, and Carmel were considered but never worked out.

BILL PATTERSON, *Centennial Organizer*: 'There was also, as Tina

Program, continued

"Mars Rovers Spirit and Opportunity: Strangers in a Strange Land" (Dr. James Rice, Jr.)

— In 2004 we were mesmerized and inspired by what was occurring on the surface of another world located across the vast gulf of space. Today NASA's Mars Exploration Rovers, Spirit and Opportunity, are still exploring the surface of Mars, lasting well over ten times their designed lifespan of ninety days. Current results from both Rovers will be reported on in this presentation.

"Private Human Space Flight: An Idea Whose Time is Soon" (Patti Smith) — Patti Smith, Associate Administrator for Commercial Space Transportation at the FAA, will reach back briefly to the early days of the Office of Commercial Space Transportation and describe milestones in the history of commercial space. She will talk about building momentum behind private human space flight what it will take to continue the momentum and the role of the public in this new enterprise.

10:00 AM – 1:00 PM

"Programming By You" (Ad Hoc Sessions) — We figured that even with this magnificent slate of programming and presentations you're reading through and attending, there was room for more. Come by and sign up for a slot at one of our big tables — create your own session of up to one hour! Talk about whatever you like but keep it respectful and respectable, don't exclude anyone who wants to participate, and, sorry, no nudity.

10:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Centennial Blood Drive (Mike Sheffield, Manager) — You probably know how much Heinlein valued and appreciated blood donors. Become one now — or renew your pledge to Heinlein's greatest legacy.

11:00 AM – Noon

"From Socialist to Libertarian" (Robert James, Brad Linaweaver, Bill Patterson, Tad Daley) — The political views of Heinlein: how they changed, and what remained constant over his life. What was EPIC, and what connected Upton Sinclair and Heinlein?

Welcoming Ceremonies

Noon – 1:00 PM

"Researching Heinlein" (Bill Patterson, Ed Wysocki) — Suggestions and advice to those interested in research concerning Robert Heinlein. What are the resources that are available to you? How do you turn the results of your research into a publishable note or article?

"Call My Broker" (Frank Smith) — How private space travel will change economics. How will investors be able to profit?

"How We Got Here" (Robin Wayne Bailey, Bill Higgins, John Scalzi, Dave Masten, Dave Creek, Tim Kyger) — The History of the Future: How our vision of the future in space has evolved since Disney's Tomorrowland.

Program, continued

"Tracking Down FOR US, THE LIVING"
(Robert James) — The story of how Heinlein's first novel was found only a few years ago, and how it came to be published.

"Everything I Needed to Know About Life I Learned from Heinlein" (Yoji Kondo, Jacqueline Lichtenberg, Lee Martindale, J. Neil Schulman) — Hear some successful people share how Heinlein affected their lives, and share your own stories.

Autographs: Tad Daley

Noon – 9:00 PM

Hyatt Speaker's Green Room (Speakers & Staff Only)

Centennial Marketplace, Art Show, Life Museum

Westin Speakers' Green Room (Speakers & Event Staff Only)

1:00 PM – 2:00 PM

"The Future of NASA" (Dr. Michael Griffin) — NASA's Administrator will talk about what's next for the agency that put men on the Moon.

2:00 PM – 3:00 PM

"TRAMP ROYALE" (Bill Patterson) — A look at Heinlein's world travels, what he wrote about them and what he learned from them.

"NASA Starts to Buy Commercial" (Dennis Stone) — Have you heard about "Commercial Orbital Transportation Services" yet? NASA is starting to buy launch services from the private sector; find out from them how it works.

"The Heinlein Chair" (Dr. Vincent Piscane) — The Heinlein Chair at the Naval Academy speaks about how that position came to be created and what he does.

"As God and Heinlein Intended" (Yoji Kondo, Dave Masten, Jess Sponable, Jim Campbell) — Single-Stage-To-Orbit: The history and future of getting to space without giving up half your ship.

"Stranger in a Strange Body" (David Gerrold, Lee Martindale, Selina Rosen, John Scalzi, J. Neil Schulman, Dr. Janice Bogstad) — Cloning, brain transplants, personality uploads: The technologies of being Somebody Else.

"Heinlein 101" (Robert James) — The essential background to understanding Heinlein and his works . . . and then a break and more of the same!

"VARIABLE STAR" (Amy Baxter, Jeanne Robinson, Spider Robinson, Eleanor Wood) — Spider Robinson and other key players in the creation of *VARIABLE STAR* about what it was like writing in Heinlein's universe.

Autographs: Kathleen Goonan, Allen Steele

2:00 PM – 7:00 PM

"Programming By You" (Ad Hoc Sessions)
Heinlein Theater (Video Room) — What, you've never seen *ROCKETSHIP X-M* or *THE BRAIN EATERS*? We've got films by Heinlein

Commentary, continued

just pointed out, the resonance with MidAmeriCon in 1976. The Kansas City site always seemed so obvious to me that I found whenever another site was brought up, it didn't feel right.

At the start I wanted the Muchlebach, the MidAmeriCon hotel, though it turned out not quite practical.

The set of associations attached to Kansas City always seemed overwhelmingly right to me.

PETER SCOTT: Kansas City also had the geographical advantage of being darn near the centroid of the lower forty-eight, and the disadvantage of being sweltering in July.

The question would have revolved for some time had I not been approached by Society member Dr. Alan Koslow, of Iowa, who had contacts in Kansas City and the enthusiasm to broker the contact. At Torcon, representatives of the Kansas City Science Fiction and Fantasy Society, there to promote KC's worldcon bid, met with Society representatives and myself to make their case. I was pleased with what they had to offer, both as a city and the fan group's willingness to assist. The other Society representatives did not, however, support a decision on venue one way or the other.

Fast forward to January, 2005. I received a phone call from Alan Koslow. I asked him how the centennial planning was going; he said there was none. He had been unable to get the Society to move on his proposal, but furthermore — *they had done nothing on an alternative*. He was frustrated and wanted to move ahead anyway. I opined that it was too late to do anything now, given hotel lead times, but he said he had a good deal on a facility (the one we ended up using), and then said that Bill Patterson was interested in making this happen.

That changed my mind about getting involved again. I said, "If Bill's part of this, then I'd like to play. Let's talk." So the three of us talked about this effort and very shortly, Bill announced that he was pulling in Jim Gifford, whom I knew by reputation but had never conversed with. Jim's first message to me was along the lines of "Who are you and what are you doing here?" and once I explained in my characteristically grandiose language, we recognized each other as kindred writers of the overblown prose school and hit it off immediately.

BILL PATTERSON: Jim and I had been discussing the Centennial, or rather, its non-existence, in a desultory way since 2002. Then quite suddenly Alan called me to discuss reviving what looked like a very dead project.

After establishing that it might be practical to get the project moving again, I suggested Alan get in touch with Peter. I don't think Peter mentioned that he was the Society's Centennial section head, so the connection was a logical one. On my part, I let Jim know that there was a practical possibility afoot. Dr. Koslow had kept up all his working contacts with the hotels and Kansas City fandom, and there was interest on the part of the hotels in picking up where discussions had died out two years earlier.

PETER SCOTT: Fast forwarding past some politics left for another story, when Heinlein Centennial, Inc. was formed, Alan and I came on board immediately. The location was our first order of business and the decision was easy.

We debated the venue — but not for long. Kansas City had so much going for it: It was adjacent to Heinlein's birthplace, was an old stomping ground of Heinlein's, and featured in several of his stories; it was geographically central to the continental USA; it was a second-tier convention city, meaning it was less expensive than first-tier cities like San Francisco and New York but still had adequate facilities and was served by many major airlines; and most critically, we had secured the support of KACSFPS, soon to be represented for us principally by Tina Black. Without local help we would have no hope, so the decision was not difficult. Alan Koslow visited the site to liaise with facility staff.

Commentary, continued

The downside of KC was that it would be a barbecue in July; but that also meant that facility rates would still be reasonable, and we didn't plan on spending time outside anyway.

JAMES D. GIFFORD *Centennial Organizer and Primus Inter Pares* — It all worked out well in the end, but I lost count of the times people said, "Kansas City?" <significant pause> "In July?"

TINA BLACK: Oh, come on, guys! It was in the high 60's —

PETER SCOTT: Celsius.

TINA BLACK: — and misty —

PETER SCOTT: — from tarmac evaporating!

TINA BLACK: — on the day I picked Tim and Peter up at the airport.

PETER SCOTT: Anyway —

BILL PATTERSON: Before we get too far away from the "politics left for another story," I wanted to mention that we didn't have any particular agenda about *how* it would be done at first. That it should be done by the Society was such a strong assumption at the start that it was necessary to get a firm and definite statement of what seemed already obvious, but which the President gave at the February 2005 meeting of the Society's Board: (paraphrasing) "The Society has no plans at this time to do anything with the Centennial." That meant anything that was going to happen, we would have to make happen by ourselves and without the Society's support. Everything else sort of *evolved* from there, on an *ad hoc* basis.

PETER SCOTT: — Meanwhile, we worked out a tentative pecking order with Bill, me, and Jim being "Cell A" in the executive, with Jim and Bill assuming financial responsibility which I declined to share in on grounds of marital diplomacy. Jim set up the non-profit org to "own" the event. I started a wiki to organize our information.

BILL PATTERSON: And some time in 2006 I asked Tim Kyger to come on board in order to help break up a logjam that was developing.

TIM KYGER: Heinlein deserved it. I wouldn't have done it otherwise.

I don't think that point cannot be made enough. He *deserved* a proper Centennial. I'm glad I was able to play a part in that, and I frankly think he actually deserved *more*.

But Christ, we all put out 110%, didn't we? *sigh*

BILL PATTERSON: You mean 110 *degrees*, don't you?

TIM KYGER: That was IguanaCon. Keep up!

PETER SCOTT: Kansas City was a terrific facility for our purposes and fortunately I only ventured outside for a few minutes. The logistics was of course not without its headaches but at least one of the hotels was unfailingly cooperative and accommodating. In terms of what the location offered I couldn't ask for more (except, perhaps, more air conditioning in The Link [a glass-enclosed walkway running between several hotels and the Convention Center] — I had to run through that tube a few dozen times each day).

BILL PATTERSON: Oh, yeah? Try running through the Link a couple dozen times a day because there is no breakdown-setup time between the program items so you're constantly shuttling between the hotels and constantly late. <grump>

JAMES D. GIFFORD: IMO, the problem with the Link is that it was designed in a non energy-conscious era and was intended to be cooled by megawatts of chiller power. Now they can't afford to change the design to be more naturally shielded. So, it's lovely, it has marvelous views, and it's like walking through a quarter-mile-long microwave oven . . .

PETER SCOTT: What you may not know . . . is that we had originally reserved a much larger space in each hotel. We figured it was

Program, continued

(*DESTINATION MOON*) or inspired by Heinlein. (No, we're not showing *STARSHIP TROOPERS 2*. There are limits). We've also got hours of rare video of Robert and Virginia Heinlein, and more! See the schedule posted outside the door.

3:00 PM – 4:30 PM

"*Spaceflight Update*" (Kent Nebergall) — It's time for a roundup of what the world's space programs have hidden on drawing boards and in distant skies. We will review the major discoveries in space for the past year and look forward to what human and robotic missions are expected to achieve in the year to come.

"*ESCAPE FROM HEAVEN*" (J. Neil Schulman) — Schulman ("The Heinlein Interview") will read and display slides from his book of this name that includes Heinlein as a character.

"*So You Want to Write Like Heinlein*" (Robin Wayne Bailey, Michael Cassutt, Robert Chilson, David Gerrold, Jim Gunn, Amanda Davidson) — What makes Heinlein's fiction special: dissecting his style, by authors who have used Heinlein as a role model.

"*Racist, Sexist, Fascist*" (Robert James, Lee Martindale) — Exploding the worst myths about Heinlein. Do FARNHAM'S *FREIHOUD* and *SIXTH COLUMN* show Heinlein to be a racist?

3:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Autographs: Yoji Kondo

4:00 PM – 5:00 PM

Autographs: Dave Creek, Selina Rosen

4:30 PM – 5:00 PM

"*The Competent Man*" (Jacqueline Lichtenberg, Lee Martindale) — A recurring character in Heinlein's stories was the teacher figure. We look at the different instances of that character, including a few you might not have expected.

"*Montana Rides Again*" (Jeff Larsen, Amanda Davidson) — Parabolic Pictures presents their 15-minute film tribute to Heinlein.

5:00 PM – 6:00 PM

"*Are We Trapped on Earth?*" (M.G. Lord, Dr. Vincent Pisacane) — The dangers posed by cosmic radiation are so daunting that even some members of the normally upbeat astronaut corps are beginning to question whether a human mission to deep space will be feasible anytime in the near future. M.G. Lord wrote a DISCOVER magazine cover story exposing this unpleasant secret and will talk about it here.

"*Cabellism*" (Bill Patterson, Frederik Pohl) — James Branch Cabell's influence on Heinlein.

"*Take Back Your Government!*" (Robert James) — The history of Heinlein's involvement in politics, his run for office, and what he taught about that effort in fiction and non-fiction.

"*Ad Astra Peroxide: The Rise and Fall of the Bell Rocket Belt*" (Bill Higgins) — Seen on TV, at

Program, continued

the World's Fair, and at the Olympics, the Bell Rocket Belt delighted millions and became an icon of the Space Age. After this "jetpack" descended from X-plane technology, made its first flight in 1961, Bell Aerospace struggled and failed to find a market for it, but a handful of enthusiasts have built new rocket belts and are flying them today.

"*The Crazy Years*" (Robert Chilson, Lee Martindale, Spider Robinson, Allen Steele, Dave Creek, Peter Scott) — Are they upon us? What's next? Where is Nehemiah Scudder, and will people start disrobing in public places? Spider Robinson had a newspaper column and book of the same title and will read excerpts from it.

5:00 PM – 11:00

Info Tables

6:00 PM – 7:00 PM

"*Chosen Family*" (Terry Brussel-Gibbons, Paula Murray, Paul Brussel-Gibbons, Barbara Trumpinski-Roberts) — How Heinlein has affected family structure in RL families.

"*The Moon Makes a Hard Bed*" (Spider Robinson, John Barnstead) — Russian translations of *THE MOON IS A HARSH MISTRESS*: The problems in translation of this particular book into Russian are especially interesting since the language of Luna is partially derived from Russian. How do you then translate it somehow back into Russian and preserve the effects it produces in an English text?

"*The Future History*" (Dave Creek, James Gifford) — The blueprint that put Heinlein on the science fiction map. We look at it in detail, including the parts for stories that were never published.

"*A Midwinter on Mars*" (Kent Nebergall) — In January of 2004, Kent Nebergall was part of an international crew sent to Mars Desert Research Station in Utah. This simulated Mars base is used by The Mars Society, NASA, and various university crews to realistically model the dynamics of human Mars exploration. The base is located in a section of the desert that is visually and geologically almost identical to Mars. The stories are numerous, from burst pipes to space suits to a reporter from *The Times* of London. Hear about the adventures (and misadventures) of almost living on the Red Planet.

"*MEHUSELAH'S CHILDREN*" (Robin Wayne Bailey, David Gerrold, Lee Martindale, John Scalzi) — Recent research suggests that before long people will be able to live as long as the Howards. We look at the challenges that Heinlein foresaw increased longevity would bring. Does long life mean nothing but loneliness?

"*The Campbell Letters*" (Robert James, Bill Patterson, Frederik Pohl) — Heinlein's relationship with his most famous editor, with

Commentary, continued

easier to cut space than add it, an assumption that wasn't necessarily accurate. Now, you may look at how many simultaneous events we had going on and think, geez, what a lot of rooms. Well, for some reason, we had initially reserved twice as many, plus a few other giant ones. What exactly we could have done with them was evidently something we never considered until a lot later, because there was just no way to use them all. So, with a little, uh, negotiation, we excised some of the space.

BILL PATTERSON: I do not doubt we could have filled the extra rooms, somewhat stressfully . . .

JAMES D. GIFFORD — Like the other organizers, I have scads of stories to tell about the effort that went into the Centennial, but the one that comes to mind right now is the nearly miraculous development of the Centennial Souvenir Book (CSB).

As a publications professional, all of the various printed and published things for the event fell to me. (I actually tabbed them, early on, as my major contribution to the effort, and then other needs grew so much that "Publications" became one of my lesser hats.)

About a year out, we had pretty much locked down the format for the event publications. Rather than doing a "program book" that contained the schedule, speaker bios, and all of the special event publications, we followed what's become common practice and broke the scheduled stuff out into its own booklet. This permitted us to print what became the Souvenir Book with a longer lead time and better quality, while being able to hold off on the schedule book until the last minute. (Actually, it went well past the last minute . . . a story for another day.)

So about then, with a year to go, I spent a few hours doing one of my favorite parts of such jobs, laying out the design and choosing the font families to use and creating an empty layout (in Adobe InDesign, for the two readers who care about such minutiae) to fill with good stuff.

Then I set it aside. There were a million tasks calling at me.

Around March of 2007, with about three months to go, it occurred to me that I needed to think about print deadlines and suchlike for the CSB. I dug around and found the files and opened . . . pages and pages of utter blankness. Although we'd discussed the contents, we'd never quite gotten around to acquiring any of it. And there were about two weeks left before the drop-dead, must-go-to-press date. And the organizing team was already swamped with the endless details of final preparations for the event.

Did I panic? I did not.

I freaked.

I started sifting my office and files for things to shovel into the layout to hold the covers apart — which sounds worse than it might have been, as after 20 years of collecting and researching Heinlein I have some damned interesting things around here. If that had been the only option, the CSB would have been at least worthy of the printing effort . . . but it wouldn't have been anything very special.

When I finally decided I had enough material for an acceptable B-version, I started working on that with one hand while we put out the call to various Heinlein-related institutions and personages. We asked the Heinlein Estate for permission to include some previously unpublished material and images — permission that was speedily and generously granted. Members of the Heinlein family came up with several dozen rare and ultra-rare photos and images. Our stellar line-up of guests put pen to paper (okay, fingers to keyboard) and wrote remembrances of Heinlein that covered completely new ground. (None of them even minded us tapping our toes, looking frequently at our watches, and hectoring them for the material . . . and at least one Very Big Name was on final deadline for a novel.)

And in the end, with my publications workstation leaking smoke

Commentary, continued

into the wee hours as that press deadline marched ever closer . . . it fell together like shaking a puzzle box and having the darned thing fall out fully assembled. The beautiful pieces so generously provided all meshed so well and complemented each other so thoroughly that I don't think there's any sign that the book simply had not existed two weeks before. I assure you that not one word of my placeholder B material survived. In fact, as I said several times in several places, we had to discard all of the really, really good material . . . because the truly excellent material crowded it out.

Off to press it went, barely in time — the finished books were delivered to Kansas City early in the week of the event.

In the end, we had 15,000 words of never-before-published Heinlein and over twenty rare photos and images . . . including the first publication anywhere of the details of his mysterious first wife Elinor. We had 12,000 words of remembrance and recollection from a sterling collection of commentators, most of them telling stories never before widely told. The fascinating thing to me about that commentary is what a complete portrait of Robert Heinlein and his friends, admirers and fans it presents. I don't think it could have done better even with several rounds of mutual reading, editing and fitting-together . . . and what you see there, folks, is just the lightly-edited first-submission material from each of the contributors. Yet it dovetails into a perfect, near-whole coverage of the topic, with surprisingly little overlap.

We were truly gifted with some magic in those final months of bringing it all together — and the story of how close it came to failing right at the last moment is yet another story, one I probably won't ever tell. Of all the memories and all the souvenirs, the Centennial Souvenir Book is what most neatly and completely sums up all that magic. My fondest hope is that some of the magic shines out each and every time a reader glances through it, for all the years to come.

PETER SCOTT re BRIAN BINNIE — 2005. It was time to populate the honored guest roster. We deliberately never referred to anyone as a "Guest of Honor" because by fiat, there were only two of those: Robert and Virginia Heinlein, *in absentia*. We were painfully aware that in order to advertise our event well in advance, we had to secure a playbill well in advance. But where to start? We weren't just new, we were unknown.

In October, Brian Binnie had piloted SpaceShipOne to win the Ansari X Prize by making a second flight to space within two weeks. In December, he gave a talk about his adventure at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory for the Caltech Management Association. We [the Centennial organizers] had decided from the beginning that this convention would be a hybrid science fiction/acrospace gathering, because Heinlein was so pivotal to the private space movement that was just beginning to blossom. The rocket jockeys of the Mojave Desert revered Heinlein as their prophet. I asked a friend to approach Binnie after his speech and present him with our flyer and ask whether he would be interested in attending. The response was positive, and I began an email exchange with Brian that shortly concluded with his historic " . . . therefore, I accept your invitation."

For an inordinately long time to follow, the name of Brian Binnie was the only one that we could trumpet on our advertising. Through more than two years until the convention, Brian remained faithful to our cause, giving an interview, asking for only modest accommodation, being in short a model guest.

Those of you who saw his keynote know how spectacularly he filled out that prime spot on our playbill. An astronaut must be brave, strong, talented, but the job description does not specify public speaking or presentation skills and yet Brian carried his night off with the expertise of a consummate professional. We are all profoundly grateful to him.

Program, continued

readings from the letters between the two.

7:00 PM – 8:00 PM

"2004: A Space Oddity" (Brian Binnie) — How SpaceShipOne won the X Prize, by the man who flew it.

7:00 PM – 9:00 PM

SFRA

Campbell, Sturgeon & Pilgrim Awards.

8:00 PM – 9:00 PM

"Heinlein Fandom Online" (John Tilden) — GENIE. Prodigy. Alt.Fan.Heinlein. SFNet Websites. Even AOL. If you're interested in how sharing how you first found another clobber or are still keeping Heinlein's memory alive via regular posts somewhere, this is an hour for you.

"STARSHIP TROOPERS: The Debate" (Lee Martindale, John Scalzi, James Gifford, Hugh S. Gregory III) — Your chance to debate whether this book glorified war. Get it out of your system once and for all! We'll cover everything about the book's meaning and effects up to how it is required reading in military academics. This is an end session, so you can go with this topic until the hotel staff kicks you out . . . and might!

"Have Spacesuit" (Bill Higgins) — Many of Heinlein's characters find wearing a space suit as natural as wearing a birthday suit. The history of the pressure suit, and its evolution into the space suit, coincides with the years of his writing career. Heinlein's direct involvement was slight, but there is a surprising connection between his Navy work and the Moon landings.

"The Juveniles" (Robin Wayne Bailey, David Gerrold, Robert James, Dr. Janice Bogstad) — A tour of the juveniles, exploring what made them great. Why is STARSHIP TROOPERS a juvenile and PODKAYNE OF MARS not?

"Rah! Rah! R.A.H.!" (Spider Robinson) — Hear from Spider Robinson about his famous article in defense of Heinlein; how it started, and the impact it had.

8:00 PM – 10:00 PM

"Rhysling, Blind Singer of the Spaceways" (Mike Taht, Margaret Middleton) — Music inspired by Heinlein. Come and listen, or join in. (Yes it's filking.)

8:00 PM – 11:00 PM

Heinlein Theater (Video Room)

SATURDAY JULY 7

9:00 AM – 10:00 AM

"R.A.H., meet H.G.W." (Brad Linaweaver, Bill Patterson) — Heinlein was a big fan of H.G. Wells. A look at Wells' life and works, and how he influenced RAH.

Program, continued

"General Semantics" (David Gerrold, Steve Stockdale) — Heinlein was enamored of this study of thought. We'll look at *SCIENCE AND SANITY* and its effect on him.

"The Next Five Years" (Jeff Greason, Selina Rosen, Frank Smith, Dave Masten, Jim Campbell) — Bootstrapping our way off the planet: What's coming next as we race toward a future in space?

"The Future of Freedom (in Space)" (Col. Bill Bruner [ret]) — The thorny issue of governance in space, according to someone involved in the effort.

"Waterbeds to Waldoes" (Allen Steele, Ed Wysocki) — Heinlein's inventions. We'll list the ideas that made it off the page, the ones that didn't, and be grateful he didn't take out patents

"Heinlein's Wives" (Robert James, Yoji Kondo, M.G. Lord; Dorothy Martin Heinlein joined the panel spontaneously on site) — Heinlein's three wives: The well-known Ginny, the shadowy Leslyn, and the secret Elinor ... what were they like, and how did each of them change Robert Heinlein?

9:00 AM – 3:00 PM

The "Critics Lounge" Social Hall

9:00 AM – Noon

Campbell Conference

9:00 AM – 5:00 PM

Event Registration

Info Tables

SFRA Sessions

9:00 AM – 9:00 PM

Hyatt Speaker's Green Room (Speakers & Staff Only)

Westin Speakers' Green Room (Speakers & Event Staff Only)(until Gala End)

10:00 AM – 11:00 AM

"In Memoriam: Virginia Heinlein"

"Delilah and the Space Rigger" (M.G.

Lord) — The Right Stuff is gender-blind: The new roles of women in aerospace.

"Heinlein's Influence on Gaming" (Noah Falstein, Steve Meretzky, Jon Mavor, Maurine Starkey) — Despite few games based directly on his novels, Heinlein has had a strong effect on video and computer games, with game elements that can be traced to books from *RED PLANET* to *THE PUPPET MASTERS* to *FRIDAY* to (of course) *STARSHIP TROOPERS*. This panel of game developers will talk about his influence on the games industry.

"The Military and Space: Just What Are They Doing?" (Jess Sponable) — Hear about what programs the Department of Defense is pursuing at this moment to try to "do" space.

"The Future Ain't What It Used To Be" (Dave Creek, Tad Daley) — Heinlein made predictions for the future and revised them at various times. We'll look at how accurate he was

Commentary, continued

And that is how we acquired our first honored guest. . .

TIM KYGER Centennial Chairman, on MICHAEL GRIFFIN — So, here's how we got our second Honored Guest.

Um, I emailed Mike Griffin. At his home email address, not the NASA one.

It was a shot in the dark, actually. I *thought* he was a RAH fan, but I wasn't sure.

It took only 15 freaking minutes for him to answer! This guy must have all his stuff from whatever email addys he had at the time forwarded to his BlackBerry, and I can assure you, after having worked at NASA for his last six months there, that he *lived* on his BlackBerry.

Michael Griffin, just to note, was the very first, and so far *only* head of NASA ever to speak before an SF or SF-related convention. Ever. Still. And he knew his Heinlein inside and out. His speech could have been one of the ones given at the SFRA event! [Dr. Griffin's address is reprinted elsewhere in this issue of the JOURNAL.]

Anyway, that was that. Not much of a story, but instead a tribute to Heinlein and the power of his persuasion, continuing now into the 21st Century.

TINA BLACK — Three weeks before the Centennial, I cleaned out my mailbox so I would have only current issues in front of me. On the day I left my house to go to the hotel, that mailbox had 3,300 e-mails in it that I had answered and finished dealing with.

Sometimes I wonder how we did large conventions before e-mail existed. Without Skype and e-mail, the planning would have been difficult. And when I look at a number like 1100 e-mails a week, sometimes I wonder that we get things done now that e-mail exists!

PETER SCOTT, wearing his Programming hat — You'll notice that the Centennial had a nice clean structure:

- Heinlein track (aka the "Reader" track or S-F track)
- Space track
- Embedded conferences: Academic forum, Campbell Conference, Science Fiction Research Association.

This structure did not spring fully-formed from the forehead of Zeus. It was the product of endless hand-wringing and over-analysis.

JAMES D. GIFFORD — While I'm thinking about it . . . The megabytes of correspondence exchanged by the organizers and various third parties in the two years leading up to the event contain many references to hats. As these references are likely to leak out in these reminiscences, a word about these metaphorical toppers might be useful.

To "put on a hat," as in some sort of temporary expertise or authority, isn't a unique phrase. "Fred, we have a payroll problem." "Okay, let me put on my payroll hat . . . now, what's up?" But we turned it into something of an art form . . .

I think I dragged this cliché into the mix, and I got it from a specific source. There was a famous advertising man, I forget exactly who it was, who actually kept a huge hat rack in his office. When someone had a question about, say, a gas station account, he would actually go get the service station attendant's hat and wear it for the discussion. Ditto for fireman's helmets, workmen's caps, etc. This was back in the day when *all* men wore hats.

In the Centennial effort, there was only a handful of us and a helluva lot of hats. So my cliché about "who has the registration hat" or "I'll put on the logistics hat sometime this weekend" spread to all the organizers and became a useful shorthand code for who was doing what (there was, unfortunately, no hat for running in circles screaming. We could have used one of those. Or two).

Since few attendees and only a couple of organizers had ever

Commentary, continued

met me in person before the event, there perhaps aren't many who wondered why I wore a brown fedora all weekend. I wasn't then a regular (real) hat wearer, but on my way out the door to the airport I snatched up my beloved Herbert Johnson and anyone who reviews their photos of the event will have trouble finding a pic of me without it. (Except at the Gala — even I wouldn't wear a brown hat with a charcoal suit!)

My raffish brown lid was there to represent, and honor, the dozens upon dozens of hats the organizers wore to get the event to completion. And now, for not entirely unrelated reasons, I am a regular hat wearer in daily life.

And if you'll now pardon me, I have to go put on my chef's hat. Family is hungry.

BILL PATTERSON: I thought that was old Navy slang or possibly you had taken it from F.M. Busby's Alien Debt series. New stuff all the time, even years later . . .

PETER SCOTT, continuing: We always knew that the Centennial would not be a typical s-f convention but instead a hybrid that probably would break all previous models. It would appeal to fans but also to non-fans, just as Heinlein did. We started out with a strawman 4-track conference that had the reader track, an academic track, a space track, and a media track. The academic track would be for scholarly refereed papers, and the media track would be for anything Heinlein-related in media other than books.

There was endless debating over the pricing structure for these tracks and how and where to cross-promote them. Suffice it to say that some of the models considered made Starbucks' menu look simple.

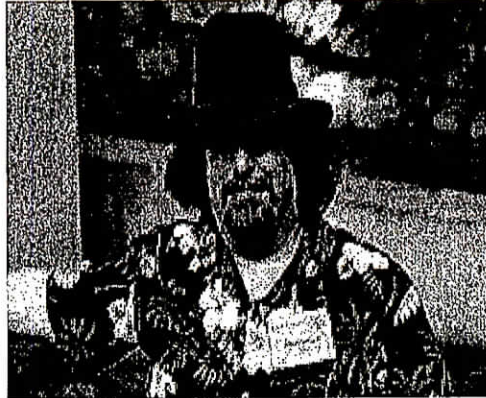
The media track withered on the vine for want of support and a clear identity. The academic track morphed into something more private as befitted its nature. The other two tracks stayed in their originally envisioned form but without any individual pricing or admission. The Campbell and SFRA [Science Fiction Research Association] conferences approached us fairly early on pointing out the synergy to be attained and we were grateful for their support.

TINA BLACK — SFRA and the Campbell conference have met together before, and the two groups literally join together for programming topics and awards ceremonies. The SFRA joined with the Campbell conference again last summer since they had so much fun with the Centennial. I think Jim [Gunn] has always been a member of SFRA — there was a joint conference in 1982 where I ran the bookselling and autographing event. And the head of SFRA once more complimented the Centennial when I ran into him last summer in Lawrence [Kansas].

Loony academics — ya gotta love 'em . . .

PETER SCOTT, continuing — We decided to focus the reader track narrowly compared to a s-f con. No masquerade or hall costumes. An art show but no auction. A dealers' room with a specific focus; you can buy generic s-f stuff at most any con; ours was going to be the con to find anything to do with Heinlein. The blood drive was a given from the start for obvious reasons and Mike Sheffield's leadership there was outstanding. We programmed filking slots after enough demand emerged but separated them from the space track sessions so as not to scare off an almost entirely different demographic.

Program, continued



Jim Gifford in brown fedora. Picture by and permission by Jack Kelly

"Heinlein 102" (Robert James) — The essential background to understanding Heinlein and his works . . . more of the same!

"Thou Art God" (Robin Wayne Bailey, David Gerrold, Lee Martindale, Selina Rosen, John Scalzi) — *STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND*: We look at the intense following generated by this book. Was it a recipe for living?

Autographs: Neil Schulman

10:00 AM — 1:00 PM

"Programming By You" (Ad Hoc Sessions)

Heinlein Theater (Video Room)

10:00 AM — 5:00 PM

Centennial Marketplace, Art Show, Life Museum

11:00 AM — Noon

"Heinlein and The Bomb" (Bill Higgins, Tad Daley) — Heinlein was concerned with the atomic bomb from his earliest stories. We look at the history of the bomb in his fiction and public statements. He thought the odds were that most of us would die in a holocaust. How did we dodge that bullet?

"How to Fly and Work in Space" (Hugh S. Gregory III) — So you want to go into space, but NASA won't take you, and you can't afford a Virgin (Uh, flight). So, why be a tourist when you can get a job in sub-orbital industry by training at the world first non-government-funded flight school.

"The Heinlein Prize Trust" (Buckner Hightower, Trustee of the Heinlein Prize Trust) — Learn the history of the Heinlein Prize Trust, its missions and goals, and how its famous recipients were chosen.

"Remembering Heinlein" (David Gerrold, Yoji Kondo, Brad Linaweaver, J. Neil Schulman, Eleanor Wood, Keith Kato) — Personal reminiscences from people who knew Robert or Virginia Heinlein.

"Give Generously" (Frank Smith, Dave Masten) — Follow the Money: How private space funding works. (Where does the money come from?)

"My Father Was a Knife" (John Scalzi, Dave Creek) — The appearance of artificial humans in Heinlein's fiction, and characters similar to them in more modern fiction. What does the future hold?

"A Scholar and a Gentleman" (Robin Wayne Bailey, Mike Cassutt, Robert James, Peter Scott) — Heinlein was gracious with his fans to a fault. Politeness and respect were prominent themes in his books, from the society that guaranteed politeness through universal personal armament to Hartley Baldwin's analysis of a sick society.

Autographs: Bill Patterson, James Gifford

Program, continued

Noon – 1:00 PM

"The Future of Space Advocacy" (George Whitesides) – The Executive Director of the National Space Society discusses how you can make a real difference in the future of space.

"The Most Dangerous Game" (Jeff Greason, Selina Rosen, Frank Smith, Dave Masten) – Space travel is dangerous. Is the assumption of zero fatalities realistic? Who belongs out there and who should stay at home?

"What I Did on My Summer Vacation" (Eric Anderson) – Hear Eric Anderson, founder of Space Adventures, talk about the process the five people he's sent to the International Space Station went through.

"Families in Heinlein" (Terry Brussel-Gibbons, Lee Martindale, Paul Brussel-Gibbons, Barbara Trumppinski-Roberts, Tina Black) – From the Rolling Stones to the Long clan to line marriages: families were heavily featured in Heinlein. We'll look at all of them.

"Heinlein on the Idiot Box" (Robin Wayne Bailey, Michael Cassutt, Bill Patterson) – Heinlein was involved in a failed attempt to bring some of his stories to television. A description from those who have seen the Archives.

"Peter Diamandis: D.D. Harriman?" (Peter Diamandis) – Dr. Peter Diamandis, winner of the first Heinlein Prize Trust Award of \$500,000, talks about the X Prize, about the Zero-G Corporation, and his other ventures.

Autographs: Brian Binnie

1:00 PM – 2:00 PM

"Commercial Space: We May Not Need D.D. Harriman" (Jeff Greason) – New times, new markets and why it's looking more like *THE DOOR INTO SUMMER* than "The Man Who Sold The Moon."

2:00 PM – 3:00 PM

"Editors in Transition" (Frederik Pohl) – How the mantle was passed from John W. Campbell, Jr. to Frederik Pohl: Why it happened, and how it happened, from Fred Pohl himself.

"Today's Heinleinian Biotech" (Dr. Martine Rothblatt) – Heinleinian biotechnologies in active development today, by the inventor and founder of Sirius Satellite Radio.

"Heinlein's Mysticism" (Robert James, Bill Patterson) – There are definite hints that Heinlein knew more about the occult than Lovecraft did. We look at Jack Parsons, Leslyn as white witch, and the evidence from the archive as to RAI's mysticism.

"Paging D.D. Harriman" (Dave Masten, Jim Campbell) – So many space startups, so little money. Where are the venture capitalist moguls for today's space entrepreneurs? And what about Harriman's marketing angles?

Commentary, continued

It sounds so easy when I put it like that.

Planning of this con was like sausage making; best not viewed by the consumer. We had debates that drove people to distraction.

Then there were the serendipities. After seeing Casey Bernay's media display at a LosCon I arranged for her to send us a Heinlein-related display. Our original plans for a life exhibit and Heinlein museum were scaled back when they encountered reality, but we still got good stuff; others can expand on what happened in that department. We got some space exhibits thrown in there and the final result in the display room was excellent; not huge, but high quality and quite fitting with the intimate nature of our con . . .

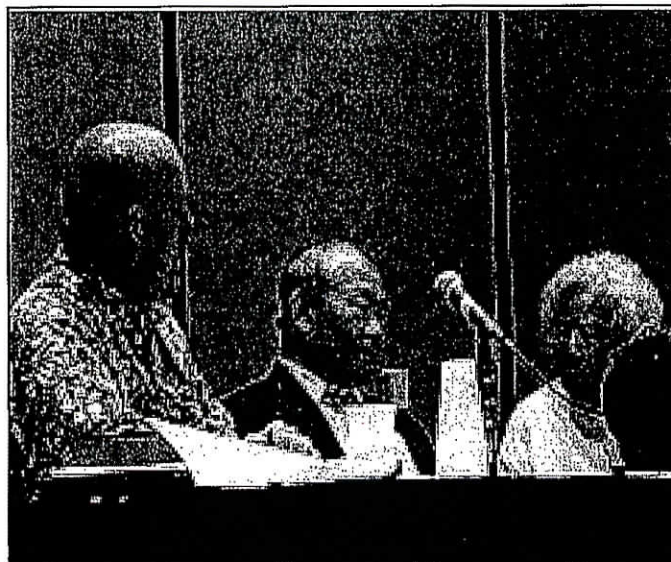
JACK KELLY regarding DOROTHY MARTIN HEINLEIN – Dorothy Heinlein, the wife of Robert's younger brother [Jesse Clare Heinlein]. She was 94 years old, and obviously as bright and alive as she ever was. She was there with a small group of other, younger Heinlein family members who lived in the KC area, I think.

She told some really fascinating inside stories. One I remember in particular took place in 1940, when her husband was attending the University of Chicago, and Robert and Leslyn visited them in their small apartment. The younger brother was struggling financially, and Robert had given him a gift of \$500 to help with expenses. Robert James read a letter from Robert to his brother, and Mrs. Heinlein filled in a lot of details. One thing she said that struck me was that Robert and Leslyn spent the night on their sofa, and in the morning Dorothy awoke early and saw Robert in his pajamas sitting at a table staring out into the distance. She asked him what he was looking for and he told her something like "the war over the horizon."

She also had quite a lot to say about Robert's first wife, although she was young when they married and divorced. She was quite emphatic that the whole Heinlein family loved second wife Leslyn and were sad when she and Robert divorced. Perhaps someone else can remember more details.

JAMES GIFFORD: I heard from the other family members that they had not seen her so bright and vibrant in quite some time, so the Centennial was an event worth her attention. Sadly, I have heard since that she went into a rapid decline afterwards. It would seem she saved her last bright spark to spend with us. I, for one, am honored beyond words.

[Mrs. Heinlein passed away on January 25, 2010.]



Dr. Robert James, Dr. Yoji Kondo, Dorothy Martin Heinlein. Photo and permission Jack Kelly.

Commentary, continued

PETER SCOTT: And then there is the list of guests who almost made it. Congressman Dana Rohrabacher. Apollo astronaut David Scott. Not to mention another Apollo astronaut, Buzz Aldrin. (Yes, we were actually in contact with him, and he said we could say that he was coming. He didn't actually say that he wasn't coming until the event happened.) Robert Silverberg. We expected columns in ANALOG from Jeffrey Kooistra and in ASIMOV'S from James Patrick Kelly. (I'm 99% certain neither of those happened but if I goofed there, someone let me know ASAP please.)

TIM KYGER: They did, both of them.

PETER SCOTT: We tracked down Richard Branson, who sent his regrets at not coming. The distinguished list of not-quite-guests goes on and on. Tom Hanks. Nichelle Nichols.

I mention these so that people get an inkling of the fact that the amount of work that was done was in fact many times the amount of work that was required. If all we had done was all that was necessary to produce the result you saw, we would have been able to take vacations. In fact, we were vastly less efficient than that. Much more work was done on various wild goose chases than was ever visible. But in our defense, only part of this can be ascribed to wanton immaturity and inefficiency. Most of it was simply due to the need to sling a lot of mud at the wall and see what stuck.

And then, there was the Gala preparation. I think the genesis of this event originated with Jim; certainly Jim ended up doing most of the planning and execution. We decided not to do a masquerade, as I said earlier (making it Heinlein-relevant would have been a picayune exercise in bureaucracy and if there had been only a few entries it would have been memorable only for the hole it left in people's schedules). . . . We envisaged an evening of varied entertainment and it would take all evening, so people had to eat . . . what other choice was there?

JAMES D. GIFFORD — The Gala planning is something Peter has either mercifully forgotten or is deliberately underplaying. We had the stage, we had the audience, we had the "acts" . . . all that remained was to organize them into a smooth three-hour program that didn't stack the wrong things together and moved from small things up to the bigger ones and to a proper finish. We took this very seriously. We thought

THE GALA — quoted from the Rhode Island Science Fiction Club's July 30, 2007, web issue, posted by JustJohn:

Then came the capstone event, the actual Gala itself. Starting around 7 p.m., a series of speakers ascended the stage, offering praise for and reminiscence of Robert and Virginia Heinlein, the official Guests of Honor for the Centennial. At one point, a prerecorded video greeting from Sir Arthur C. Clarke was shown (Sir Arthur suffers from post-polio syndrome, and can neither travel, nor maintain sustained effort, so both the video greetings and the prerecording were necessary). Sir Arthur is the only surviving "Big Three" SF writer, Isaac Asimov and Robert Heinlein having predeceased him.

The Gala was emceed by Robin Wayne Bailey, who curiously adopted vocal mannerisms highly reminiscent of Paul Lynde to an increasing degree throughout the evening. Several times a toastmaster was called to the stage [Col. Coffin]. A mildly amusing bit of political posturing occurred as Mr. Bailey rather ostentatiously announced at one point, "Excuse me while I move the microphone a bit to the left"; later on, [Col. Coffin] made a pointedly humorous adjustment as he "[moved] this back to the right a little." Heinlein readers are of many political stripes, not just Libertarian.

Program, continued

"Get to LEO and You're Halfway to Anywhere in the Solar System" (Frank Smith, Michael Laine) — . . . so said Heinlein in FRIDAY. Hear about how the Space Elevator (aka the Quito Skyhook) will take us well past LEO to anyplace in the Solar system, and its current state and plans.

VARIABLE STAR (Reading) (Spider Robinson, Jeanne Robinson) — As read by Spider Robinson. Spider just finished recording VARIABLE STAR for Blackstone Audiobooks. Spider is a very accomplished reader. (He's currently up for an Audie Award for his reading of another of his novels, CATHAN'S LEGACY.)

"Sex!" (Robin Wayne Bailey, Lee Martin-dale, Barbara Trumpinski-Roberts) — In his later works Heinlein appeared almost obsessed. More than anything this is probably what brought him to mainstream attention. What was he trying to tell us?

Autographs: David Gerrold

2:00 PM – 5:00 PM

"Programming By You" (Ad Hoc Sessions)

3:00 PM – 4:30 PM

"I Can See For Miles and Miles and . . ."

(Brian Binnie) — What's it really like in space? Ask someone who's been there. Brian Binnie, the astronaut who won the X Prize, will describe the suborbital experience.

"In His Image" (Robin Wayne Bailey, David Gerrold, Yoji Kondo, John Scalzi, Allen Steele, Dave Creek) — Many authors took their inspiration from Heinlein; some more directly than others. Hear from some of them about the influence Heinlein had on their writing career.

"All You Zombies" (Bill Ritch, Atlanta Radio Theater Company) — A one-act play of one of Heinlein's most memorable stories.

3:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Centennial Blood Drive

3:00 PM – 5:00 PM

Centennial Summit Session II

3:00 PM – 7:00 PM

Autographs: Spider & Jeanne Robinson, Ben Bova, James Gunn, Chris McKittrick, Fred Pohl, Robert Charles Wilson

4:30 PM – 5:00 PM

"Heinlein the Reader" (Michael Cassutt, Bill Patterson) — What books did Heinlein read? You probably know about Twain . . . and Wells . . . maybe even Cabell. But what else had an impact on him?

"Amy Baxter: Heinlein's Grandchild" (Amy Baxter) — The Heinleins never had children, but they did have a grandchild: hear her tell you the story of how it happened.

"The 'Stinkeroos'" (Robert James, Yoji Kondo, Frederik Pohl) — Heinlein wrote three stories early on that were so bad even he didn't think they should ever be reprinted. You can be the judge of that as we explore what we know of them.

Program, continued

5:00 PM – 7:00 PM

07/07/07 Gala Reception — The Gala Dinner on Saturday evening is an extra-cost event and was largely sold out in advance. For Centennial attendees who missed out on the Dinner, chose not to buy a ticket, or are otherwise interested in socializing more loosely, we offer the parallel Gala Reception in the Hyatt Regency Ballroom Atlanta Room. Times are above. It offers a no-host bar and *hors d'oeuvres*, as well as the companionship of quite a few event attendees. Be sure to leave in time to reach the Gala itself in the Westin Century Ballroom at 7:00 pm!

07/07/07 Gala Dinner — Social event and buffet dinner preceding the Gala. Separate admission.

7:00 PM – 11:30 PM

07/07/07 Gala

LADY MAGDALENE'S — A special showing of J. Neil Schulman's new movie, starring Nichelle Nichols.

SUNDAY JULY 8

9:00 AM – 10:00 AM

"Requiem" (Yoji Kondo) — Readings from the speeches that were made at Heinlein's 1988 memorial at the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum.

"Animated Heinlein" (Michael Cassutt, James Gifford) — The history of Heinlein in animated form is brief but fascinating.

"Meet Your Future" (Part 1) (Pat Bahn, Jeff Greason, Chuck Iauer) — Meet the founders of your future in space: the chief executives of TGV Rockets, XCOR and Kistler Rocketplane.

"Whatever Happened to..." (Dave Masten) — Rocket ventures that never made it, from Volksrocket to Rotary Rocket.

"What Really Happened During the War" (Bill Higgins, Bill Patterson, Ed Wysocki) — During WWII, Heinlein was assigned to a mysterious project along with some other science fiction writers. We look at what that project was really about.

"Heinlein and God" (Robert James, Lee Martindale, J. Neil Schulman) — We look at religion in Heinlein's works and life. We'll also cover religions spun off from Heinlein's orbit: The Church of All Worlds and Scientology.

9:00 AM – 1:00 PM

"Programming By You" (Ad Hoc Sessions)

9:00 AM – 3:00 PM

The "Critics Lounge" Social Hall

Info Tables (Last minute registrations in Event Operations Office)

Centennial Marketplace, Art Show, Life Museum

9:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Hyatt Speaker's Green Room (Speakers & Staff Only)

Commentary, continued

about it a lot. We . . . somehow didn't get around to it until most of the dinner guests were seated. We wrote the evening's program on an old envelope, or something very much like it, in about ten minutes of frantic collaboration, less than half an hour before the metaphorical curtain went up. Chuck Coffin's excellent toasts were thought up and added at that time; Chuck was as surprised as we are but rose to the occasion, even getting into a delightfully snarky exchange of political wit with MC Robin Wayne Bailey.

I sincerely believe in "all right on the night" — 'cuz folks, I've been there.

PETER SCOTT — And now . . . two years later . . . my account of that weekend.

The road to Victoria airport is never crowded by any standards except the locals', but when I left home at 4:00 a.m. on Wednesday, July 4th, 2007 it was a vehicular wasteland. The 6am flight to Seattle was the only option for getting me to Kansas City the same day, which, after a stop at the mammoth Dallas-Fort Worth airport, I arrived at that evening. Outside the gate an unfamiliar figure held a sign with my name on it, and that was the first time I met our esteemed chairman, Tim Kyger, who was standing watch for Tina Black, ensconced in a nearby bar.

Tim had been until now a voice on the phone, our man in the Pentagon. Tina was our woman in KC, the head of all things local and our liaison to the Kansas City Science Fiction and Fantasy Society (KaCSFFS). We'd met once before, at LACon IV, in the Centennial's hospitality suite. That was our only previous collective experience at hosting an event. Now we were about to go considerably further than a few videos and *hors d'oeuvres*. After a few prayers to the automotive gods, the TinaMobile, stuffed with convention supplies and ourselves, was off to downtown, where I became profoundly glad that I had a guide and didn't have to try navigating by myself.

The Hyatt Crown Center boasts an elegant interior design with massive dendritic chandeliers. After checking in, I asked the quickest way to our sister hotel, the Westin, where our operations center was being set up. Well, it turns out that if you ask that question in the Hyatt lobby, as I did, it is a hair shorter to go outside along the street than the alternative, if they assume that you're going to the Westin lobby, which I wasn't. One fifteen-minute walk along the streets convinced me of three things: (1) I wasn't going to do that again; (2) I didn't want our out-of-town guests navigating the pedestrian crossings at night; (3) Our hotels were further apart than I thought! Fortunately there was a quicker and cooler route for getting between the ballroom levels of both hotels which our events were taking place on: "The Link," a glass pedestrian tube the locals call The Habitrail for obvious reasons, which visits the Crown Center mall on the way. Even with air conditioning, however, it was . . . toasty. I was destined to lose a few pounds crossing it many times each day at full tilt.

In the Westin's Board Room I found our nascent operations center, and Jim Gifford deploying an array of publishing technology. Later we went up to our VIP hospitality suite in the Hyatt to enjoy the fireworks around the city from a crow's nest view. Robert James ("that's Doctor James to you") and Bill Patterson were there, and Robert slid a glossy booklet across the table to me. It was the souvenir book created by Jim, and it exceeded my wildest dreams: never-before-published Heinlein writings, photographs I'd never seen, a sumptuous layout, in its own plastic cover. It had Collector's Item written all over it.

BILL PATTERSON: Little did you know What Was To Come! Jim had just finished running his edit of the "This, I Believe" combination video/audio presentation, and the hairs were still standing up on the

Commentary, continued

back of my neck.

PETER SCOTT: Thursday morning I hightailed it over to the Board Room ready for action. A KaCSSFS team was preparing badges and clucking over the important names as they came across them. The schedule books arrived, but we discovered that they were mispaginated and the whole run had to be redone. Could they get them to us before the next morning? The Science Fiction Research Association's conference-within-our-conference started shortly and was so smoothly run that I never had to pay any attention to it. Joyce Downing (Registration Queen) drove me over to John Taylor's where I helped load materials that had been shipped to John's in advance of our arrival.

TINA BLACK: This seems as good a place as any to mention that Pat Taylor died on July 5, just before the Centennial started, after a long illness. It was expected — but, still, John Taylor did what he intended to do for the Centennial anyway.

PETER SCOTT: Yes. John's wife died during the convention, and while that had been expected for some time, John continued working for us throughout the event and remained in good spirits.

BILL PATTERSON: A lot of dedication went into this event, from all angles.

PETER SCOTT: Back at the Westin, our vinyl banners arrived (these were so gorgeous that they were carefully bequeathed at the end to a few of the people clamoring for them — I have one, nyah, nyah) and there was some debate with the hotel management over where they could be hung. The very professional Westin banqueting staff had provided Jim and me with radios so that we could reach them around the clock — and we did.

— Joyce got Registration open on time and our public started to sign up. There were serendipitous tales abounding —

— somehow, we got a mention on the giant LED sign at the exit of the Kansas City airport, and a Heinlein fan and pilot arriving on layover saw it. His layover hotel happened to be the Westin. When he discovered our event he signed up and spent the rest of his layover in bliss.

The only official Centennial event of the evening was the Early Arrivals Reception, at which Bill Patterson held forth on his Heinlein biography (honest . . . it was the only time we could fit it in. Ask Bill.)

On Friday the game started in earnest. We had so much programming we wanted to do that I had to schedule some to take place first thing in the morning before even the opening ceremonies — it was the only way Bill Patterson and Robert James would get any breaks during the weekend. The very professional —

BILL PATTERSON: Wait! We had *breaks* that weekend??? Why didn't anybody tell me??!

PETER SCOTT: —video crew started setting up in the main ballroom, and a sweet woman by the name of Leandra Jones found me and made herself tirelessly available for many hours of Programming assistance throughout the convention. At our opening ceremonies Tim and Jim and I nervously introduced ourselves and I arrogantly predicted that people would remember the event for the rest of their lives. I thanked our many honored guests in advance for setting aside their usual stellar status to be part of a large ensemble cast celebrating Robert and Ginny, our only true Guests of Honor.

Our first keynoter was an hour away, and knowing that he had to be somewhere around, I roamed the hotels looking for Mike Griffin, the administrator of NASA. I found him walking around by himself looking at our displays. When he gave his speech, I realized that we had an issue with geography: even though I had scheduled nothing against the keynoters, because they were speaking in the Westin ballroom and the main programming was in the Hyatt, some people were not making the ten minute trek along the Habitrail but going to

Program, continued

Westin Speakers' Green Room (Speakers & Event Staff Only)

10:00 AM – 11:00 AM

"*Stranger than Life*" (J. Neil Schulman) — The unfortunate tale of how Heinlein's most famous novel came to be wrongly associated with Charles Manson.

"*Heinlein in the Movies*" (Michael Cassutt, Jeff Larsen) — The uneven history of Heinlein's works on the silver screen, from *DESTINATION MOON* to *STARSHIP TROOPERS*. Find out what's in the works for future release, and the history of options that didn't make it.

"*Meet Your Future*" (Part 2) (Dave Masten, Jim Benson, Eric Anderson) — Meet the founders of more aerospace companies: Space Adventures, Benson Space Company, and Masten Space.

"*Building Martian Spacecraft . . . At Home in Your Spare Time*" — (Kent Nebergall) — In 2004, Kent Nebergall won the Mars Society's Kepler Prize for Mars Mission Design with little more than Excel, Word, Visio, and a dozen reference books. His 52-page paper outlined an Earth Return Vehicle that would go to Mars robotically and create its own fuel for the return trip. After a crew of four arrived and spent 500 days in a different spacecraft, the Earth Return Vehicle would fly them home. Kent has since competed in the MarsDrive Mars Sample Return competition with a more detailed design for a much smaller spacecraft. Kent will be discussing how the power of home computing and tools you may have already, plus a little know how, can turn your fascination with space into published work that can add to the collective engineering knowledge base.

"*Heinlein's Heroines*" (Jacqueline Lichtenberg, M.G. Lord, Lee Martindale) — The strong female characters of Heinlein's stories, what they have in common and what sets them apart.

"*Decoding Heinlein*" (Robert James, Bill Patterson, James Gifford) — A look at what the lit'r'ry critters have done with Heinlein, from Knight to Blish to Panshin to Franklin to Stover to Patterson . . . and what needs to be done still.

11:00 AM – Noon

"*Teaching Heinlein*" (Jim Gunn, Robert James) — Believe it or not, some people get paid for teaching about Heinlein. Come and hear how you can teach about him in high school and college, from people who have done it.

"*The Heinlein Archives*" (Bill Patterson, Geo Rule, Deb Rule) — We introduce the online Heinlein Archives, which launches to the public July 7, 2007. It will be over 200,000 pages of Heinlein documents, manuscripts, and photographs — all the materials in the

Program, continued

Heinlein Archives at UC Santa Cruz — all available to the public online in digital form. www.HeinleinArchives.net

"Exotic Technologies: *Lightships and Warp Drives, Oh My!*" (Jeff Greason) — Education and speculation on the wilder side of space propulsion.

"Big I. or Little I." (Brad Linaweaver, Bill Ritch, J. Neil Schulman) — Heinlein and Libertarianism. His involvement with the political movement, and the status he has with its members even today.

"Paging Dora" (David Gerrold, Peter Scott) — Heinlein's vision of the computers of the future changed radically in under 20 years. We look at the evolution of Heinlein's computers and speculate on what sort of devices he would be writing about today.

Autographs: John Scalzi

Noon — 1:00 PM

"By His Bootstraps" (J. Neil Schulman, Richard Hanley, Diane Furnshek) — The different models of time travel that appear in Heinlein's stories: What they have in common, how they affected the plot, and whether they have any scientific basis.

"Philanthropy 101: *Heinlein and Paying It Forward*" (Mike Sheffield) — Robert A. Heinlein was known as the "Dean of Science Fiction Writers," but he was much more. He was a philanthropist who helped many charitable causes and individuals. When asked how he could be repaid for his help, he would reply, "You can't pay me back, you have to pay it forward." Come for a discussion of RAH's altruism, his support for blood donation, and his belief in the general goodness of his fellow humans.

"Heinlein's Real Legacy" (Michael Cassutt, Tad Daley) — Larry Niven said in *REQUIEM* that in the long run Heinlein may have a greater impact on human history than Hitler or Stalin. What do you think? What will his most important and most lasting legacies be?

"*Riding on Light*" (Dr. Jordin Kare, Dr. Leik Myrabo) — Hear about light-launched vehicles in practice.

"Heinlein's Fantasies" (Robin Wayne Bailey, Brad Linaweaver, Dr. Vincent Pisacane) — (No, no, the fantasies he wrote.) Although best known as a writer of science fiction, Heinlein also wrote highly original, highly influential fantasies, many considered classics of the sub-genre of UNKNOWN-type fantasy. Even more interesting are those "ambiguous" science fiction stories masquerading as fantasies.

"I Now Pronounce You . . ." (Terry Brussel-Gibbons, Jacqueline Lichtenberg, Lee Martin-dale, Paul Brussel-Gibbons, Barbara Trum-pinski-Roberts) — A look at the different models for relationships (such as line marriages) that Heinlein wrote about

Autographs: Robert James

Commentary, continued

cat instead. I hadn't scheduled in food breaks — there wasn't time! For the rest of the weekend we made announcements in program rooms reminding people of the keynote talks.

TIM KYGER: Just to keep it noted, Patti Grace Smith, the head of the FAA's AST Office — she was the Assistant Administrator of the FAA for Space Transportation — spoke first at the convention, at her request. She stayed the entire Centennial but wanted to speak first.

While the speaker that followed her, Mike Griffin, might have been the guy running NASA, she was the woman running licensing and registration of all commercial space transportation activities in the United States. I dare say that the case could be made that she was 'way more important than the head of NASA (but I won't!)

PETER SCOTT, continuing — I wanted to make sure that our sessions which had requested projectors got them, so I showed up to one ten minutes early to look at the equipment: Video cart, check; video cables, check; screen, check; projector . . . uh-oh. After a quick conversation with the Hyatt management I discovered that the "projection packages" we had ordered did not, in fact, include projectors; they cost extra. Go figure. So we bit the bullet and ordered them delivered immediately.

I was glad that I had scheduled myself as a panelist for "The Crazy Years," because it meant I finally got to sit down! But as soon as it was over I hared off in search of our next keynoter, Brian Binnie, and found him checking his audio in the ballroom. Brian, the astronaut who won the X Prize, was our first keynoter to agree, almost two years earlier. His presentation was jaw-droppingly professional, enthralling, educational, and humorous. I never knew before how his mother-in-law's coffee nearly cost him the X Prize. (You had to be there.)

Saturday, 7/7/7. Robert Heinlein's birthday, and — coincidentally I'm sure — mine also. My only regret was that my wife wasn't with me (we couldn't afford it), but she surprised me anyway by asking my hotel to send chocolate cake to my room.

Yesterday's Space track had focused on government-led activities; today was concerned with current private enterprise efforts. One of the changes to the published schedule (covered in our twice-daily newsletter, *THE DAILY LUNATIC*) was Peter Diamandis' talk moving to the keynote slot. And what an electrifying presentation it was. To describe Peter as being passionate about making space accessible to the common man in our lifetimes is like calling the Cretaceous asteroid impact a fender bender. I could see why Tim had suggested we compare him to D.D. Harriman, even though Peter himself eschews the comparison — he's not as ruthless as Harriman, but he certainly is as creative. His story of how he financed the X Prize was right out of Heinlein: Instead of fronting the whole \$10 million, he took out an insurance policy for a lesser premium, and convinced the Ansaris to fund the premium. The man is a serial entrepreneur — he's running Zero G Corporation, the company that flew Stephen Hawking in free-fall.

The banquet was superb — I can attest to that, since I made sure to grab a few bites between gala preparations. Definitely a cut above my usual experience of hotel buffets for large functions.

TIM KYGER: I want to chime in to agree here: that was one of the finest, tastiest meals I have ever had in my life. It was incredible. And the fact that it was the result of a hotel banquet . . . well! That's amazing (No, that's FANTASTIC, Ted).

PETER SCOTT, continuing — We had been overwhelmed with last-minute sign-ups for the dinner, and the Westin graciously accommodated us beyond our agreement by opening up an air wall and putting some extra tables in. Somehow, we didn't run out of food. Throughout dinner we were elegantly serenaded by the Atlanta Radio Theater Company's keyboardist playing science fiction themes.

TIM KYGER: The ARTC keyboardist's playing was incredibly

Commentary, continued:

funny — deliberately. I know this because I asked him and complimented him on it. It had me in stitches, especially as he and I seemed to be the only ones getting the jokes!

PETER SCOTT, continuing — Around 6:15, I announced that people might want to grab a space in the general seating for the gala to follow; and they must have had a sense of what was to follow, because there was quite a dash for choice seats.

The Gala was so well run that I spent most of the time enjoying it as a spectator. I say "well run" knowing full well that the actual program for that night was finalized on a napkin during dinner. But it came together perfectly. By now everyone knows that we had a video speech Arthur C. Clarke made especially for us — despite visible poor health he was as lucid and interesting as ever.

JAMES D. GIFFORD — Arthur C. Clarke was someone we dearly wanted to have at the event, but he had stopped traveling more than a decade earlier and had just given up live video links — his health would simply no longer permit it. When contacted, however (I had a tenuous correspondence with him regarding Heinlein, so I had the smallest hook on which to hang a request) he was instantly agreeable. It came down to him finding time in his schedule, almost a year later in March 2007, to record a brief address. There were various stumbling blocks such as his request for us to pay shipping and other minor costs, which in the end were brushed aside. He and his staff did not have time to edit a final version, and so entrusted me with creating a final cut. This turned out to be no small obligation, as Clarke's health was poorer than most suspected — the late stages of Post-Polio Syndrome left him able to speak and function only in very short bursts. I received about twenty minutes of raw footage which included several retakes of each part of his speech. He frequently ran out of energy in the middle of sentences and had to pause and restart. I can say that his professionalism paid off — he knew his limitations and when he hit a wall, he simply stopped, composed himself, and made a clean restart of whatever sentence he was struggling with. Although the editing job was extensive, it was also easy to seam together his short efforts into a coherent flow. I put in many extra hours on fine details of lapping one cut into another, and the final result shows only one or two noticeable edits in its three minute length. I felt I had the obligation to fulfill his trust to the very limit and not let his disabilities obscure his message.

BILL PATTERSON: Clarke learned to be a trooper. I understand he went through some hard times in the 1980's, which he, like Mark Twain, remedied by touring the world, speaking.

JAMES GIFFORD: I was shocked at his concluding statement, and having heard it many times, was carefully watching the audience when it was projected on the big Gala screen. He did not say so long, or good evening, or any of the other placeholders for "see you sometime again" ... he very firmly said, "Goodbye," with the demeanor of someone who knows the end of the road is very close. It was tremendously moving and there was the expected ripple of slight shock through the audience.

ACC lived only nine months more, and the Centennial address was one of his very last through any medium.

PETER SCOTT: There was another video I had never seen before — Ginny Heinlein reading Robert's "This I Believe" at his memorial service in Washington; but Jim had added a twist by adding a much older audio recording of Robert reading it himself, and a little way in, he faded that up. At the end, when Robert concluded with, "This I believe, with all my heart," followed by Ginny repeating the words, there couldn't have been a dry eye in the house.

A tough act to follow, and not for the first time did I not envy our emcee, the suave Robin Wayne Bailey, who rose to the occasion splendidly, and kept everyone amused and informed while moving things along rapidly. Peter Diamandis gave a riveting presentation

Program, continued:

1:00 — 2:00 PM

"Heinlein's 21st Century: The Frontier Beckons" (Rick Tumlinson) — Presentation by the Space Frontier Foundation. SFF's first check was from Ginny Heinlein.

2:00 — 3:00 PM

"The Heinlein Interview" (J. Neil Schulman) — J. Neil Schulman plays audio excerpts from his interview with Heinlein, transcribed in his book, *THE ROBERT HEINLEIN INTERVIEW AND OTHER HEINLEINIANA*.

"ROCKET TO THE MORGUE" (James Gifford) — *ROCKET TO THE MORGUE* by "H.H. Holmes" aka "Anthony Boucher" aka William A.P. White is a mystery novel set amid the sf writers of early 1940s LA. Most of the characters are thinly disguised real figures; one of the main ones is "Anson Carter," a very thinly veiled Heinlein. The book is a fascinating story and the story of the book is a fascinating story.

"Tom Sawyer in Space" (Robert James, Bill Patterson, Frederik Pohl) — Mark Twain was not only the model for Jubal Harshaw, but an idol of Heinlein's. A retrospective of Twain's life and what Heinlein gained from him.

"Heroines in Transition" (Jacqueline Lichtenberg, Lee Martindale, Dr. Janice Bogstad) — Looking at the evolution of Heinlein's female characters from his juveniles to the later works.

"Heinlein's Children" (Robert Chilson, David Gerrold, Yoji Kondo, Peter Scott) — We often talk of "Heinlein's Children," but what does it really mean?

"The Menace from Earth" (Bill Ritch, Atlanta Radio Theater Company) — The Atlanta Radio Theater Company presents their audio play based on the famous Heinlein story.

Autographs: M.G. Lord

3:00 — 4:00 PM

"The Heinlein Prize Trust" (Buckner Hightower) — Learn the history of the Heinlein Prize Trust, its missions and goals, and how its famous recipients were chosen. (repeat)

"Rex, the Wonder Rocket" (Jess Sponable, Tim Kyger) — The story of the DC-X.

"RAH-LA-LA" (Michael Cassutt, Robert James, Bill Patterson) — Heinlein's life in Los Angeles, 1932–1942. Surely Heinlein's formative years: He married Leslyn, got involved with politics, and became a writer. Learn more about what happened to him during that crucial period.

"Watered by the Blood of Patriots" (Robin Wayne Bailey, Jacqueline Lichtenberg, Brad Linaweaver, J. Neil Schulman, Dr. Janice Bogstad) — Heinlein gave us a compelling vision of revolution in *THE MOON IS A HARSH MISTRESS*. Jefferson thought every generation should have its own revolution. Have we missed out on something?

Autographs: Lee Martindale

Program, continued:

4:00 – 5:00 PM

Closing Ceremonies (Tim Kyger, Jim Gifford, Peter Scott, Keith Kato, Tina Black) — We're all done. All that's left to do is make a date for 2107, in Luna City.

Commentary, continued:

on his plans for "X Racing" — like pod racing from Star Wars Episode I — personal rocket-powered airplanes racing through aerial courses with each other and remote participants. The video was one of those hold-onto-your-seat times.

JAMES GIFFORD: When it came time to introduce the Clarke address, I took my only turn on the Gala stage to do so . . . and had the misfortune to follow one of the most vibrant and dynamic speakers of the entire event. I had my prepared statement, but standing there before the lingering crowd-buzz, I noted, "I had never met Peter Diamandis before this weekend, and while I hope to maintain a connection to him and work with him on future projects, I never . . . ever . . . want to follow him on stage again." (I've gotten few bigger laughs on a stage and treasure that one.)

PETER SCOTT: So many things happened at the Gala, I don't remember them all — Susan Satterfield presented the short story awards, Yoji Kondo presented the Heinlein Award, and Spider and Jeanne Robinson did a musical number. Jeanne gave a slide show on her Stardance zero-gravity dance film project, and in the most dramatic unscripted moment of the Gala, when someone in the audience asked whether she had considered going into freefall for inspiration herself, and she admitted that much as she'd like to, the budget had to go to production, Peter Diamandis called out from the back of the room, "I'll fly you, Jeanne." Cue thunderous applause.

Jordin Kare gave a rendition of "The Green Hills of Earth" and Chuck Coffin, resplendent in dress uniform, closed us out with a final toast.

BILL PATTERSON: While you may be forgiven for neglecting to mention the post-Gala showing of J. Neil Schulman's *LADY MAGDALENE* (though, obviously, not by Neil), it would be *unden* to neglect the film shown during the Gala, of Brad Linaweaver firing the one and only original Brass Cannon that helped spark off *THE MOON IS A HARSH MISTRESS*. Ginny Heinlein had bequeathed it to him, and he had had it repaired and put back in firing condition.

The original plan was to follow the Heinleins' Colorado Springs example and fire it for the Fourth of July, but the nightmare of paperwork to fire a cannon in the streets of downtown Kansas City scotched that plan. He could not even have transported the gunpowder firing charges across state lines.

Brad was not able to be with us — though he stands somewhere between "benefactor" and "friend of the Centennial" — so he had the test firings filmed (with the . . . assistance of several others, including Neil and J. Kent Hastings, who presented it at the Gala, and myself with a modest cameo appearance) and sent the Brass Cannon on to us.

It was on display in the Marketplace dealer's room, and the test firings were shown during the Gala. Afterwards Bill Ritch took charge of the Brass Cannon and transported it on to Brad in Florida.

PETER SCOTT *continuing*: I pitied the speakers who had to start Sunday morning at 9:00, but again, the schedule demanded it. The day's Space track focused on more exotic and longer term projects like laser-launched spacecraft. I scheduled myself for another panel that I was actually able to make, talking with David Gerrold about intelligent computers, and out of sentiment, also put myself on the "Heinlein's Children" panel, which unfortunately meant I missed the ARTC's second production, "The Menace From Earth" — at least I'd seen most of their "All You Zombies" on Saturday, and promptly bought their CD — those people were good.

BILL PATTERSON: ARTC — the Atlanta Radio Theatre Company — is headed by Bill Ritch.

PETER SCOTT *continuing*: Our final keynote speaker, Jeff Greason (president of XCOR) gave an emotional speech about how Heinlein had affected him.

TIM KYGER: This was an exceptionally fraught moment, folks: XCOR looks like it may become one of the big important companies of the 21st century (along with Elon Musk's SpaceX and Virgin Galactic). *And he's doing it because Heinlein inspired him.* This kind of thing came up over and over at the Centennial, and it means we did something very right —

BILL PATTERSON — and it also indicates, in a more global sense, that the Centennial was an *appropriate* thing to do. It's not just a personal feeling we all had; it was a *realio-trulio moment* we created, pulling the whiskers of the *zeitgeist*.

There were nattering nabobs of negativity (don't you love the sixties? Don't you love not having to live through the sixties again?) who whispered and innuendo'd and implied that it was not a project worth doing.

PETER SCOTT *continuing* — In my experience, the only people left at weekend conventions at 4 pm on Sunday are the breakdown crew, yet we had a full house for closing ceremonies, which ended right on schedule precisely at 5 pm. By then, we knew we had pulled it off — numerous people had told us how good a time they had had, some calling it better than any Worldcon and the best convention they'd ever been to. I predicted to the crowd that one day, when people were talking about the weekend, some gnashing their teeth over not having gone, others would smile smugly and say that they were there — and some of them — those present — would be telling the truth. (Considering how credit for the event was later ascribed in some quarters to people who weren't involved, I would call that theater, which unfortunately I didn't have time to get to. The continuous autographing sessions, the late night movies — somehow we pulled off a complete, well-rounded convention.

To be continued . . . Where, when, who . . . ? It's up to us, and you.

ROBERT JAMES: . . . the Centennial . . . was the high point of my con experience, as well as my professional

experience outside of the classroom. I was aware of some of that nonsense going on behind the scenes, and early on, committed myself firmly to following wherever Jim, Peter and Bill led, having come to realize they were heading in the right direction. They asked if I wanted to be involved in some leadership role, and given my personal travails at the time (two jobs, and a nasty, never-ending court battle), I didn't want to commit and then let them down — but I fully committed to being there, and doing whatever programming they wanted me to be on.

I forgot: never volunteer. I ended up being on 20 panels, if I recall correctly. I do recall making a few suggestions right around the time they asked what panels I wanted to be on, and they graciously added almost everything I suggested. Little did I know that they would be putting me on that many panels...

As Peter said at the closing ceremony, he thinks that must have been some kind of record — to which I shouted out "One... more... panel!" To which Bill shouted even louder, "Nooooooooo!"

I didn't get much of a chance to see anybody else's panels, and I remember having to leave one academic panel immediately after I presented a paper, because I had to get to the next panel I was on. I spent as much time in that Habitrail between the hotels as I did on the panels, or so it seemed. I remember drinking vast quantities of cold water during panels, so I could keep the voice in shape — and then having to run to the bathroom between panels... and having more than one fan follow me in as they asked me questions...

I do recall the audiences being wonderful, and laughing in all the right places...

There are highlights I will never forget from that weekend

I got to introduce Peter Diamandis to James Gunn and Fred Pohl, after noticing "The Man Who Sold the Moon" standing off sheepishly, not knowing how to approach those legends of sf... fortunately, I had had dinner with them both, and served on panels with them both, and I loved being able to bring them together...

Meeting Fred Pohl and James Gunn were moments I will cherish as well.

Getting to interview Dorothy Heinlein, the last person alive who knew Elinor Curry and Leslyn, and helping her along in her memories — and then having the family thank me afterwards for letting her shine, was magnificent.

Finally getting to set a wrong right by reading Jack Williamson's letter about Heinlein at the Gala was almost as good as finding a copy of *FOR US, THE LIVING* after everybody thought it was gone...

Watching the relief on Jim and Peter's faces when it was finally all done and accomplished was priceless as well.

Also, meeting with the entire Heinlein family, who showed up in a hotel room I was waiting in, by myself, and managing to put them all at their ease and keep them entertained until Bill and others showed up was fun, if a bit nerve-racking at first. I'm great in front of an audience, but put me in a room of strangers, and I tend to clam up...

BILL PATTERSON: Oh, come now, Robert: I told you

Bill Bacchus and Andy Lerner wouldn't bite, didn't I? (I was still at that "Brownian motion" stage of helping get this and that finalized and up and running and couldn't take ten steps without being buttonholed, so I was running half an hour late to meet with the Heinlein family contingent who had decided to have their own Family reunion-within-the-Centennial — which I thought was outstandingly gracious and supportive. But the Robert-and-Bill show functions perfectly well without Bill — and we all know what *that* means...

ROBERT JAMES *continuing*: All in all, the Centennial was beyond price. I'd ask to do it again, but having read this whole history, I wouldn't wish it on my worst enemy...

... or maybe I would, as long as I got to be on more panels...

BILL PATTERSON — *Noooooooooooo!*

AUDREY GIFFORD — Having watched the very painful gestation and birth of the Centennial from a very close perspective, I think it needs to be said that the Kansas City Crowd Tina headed, (as well as the founding fathers — Peter Bill, Jim and a very few others but they were the three I heard from the most) and not very many other people pulled together an absolutely impossible miracle out of a hat full of well, hubris and audacity, really.

And it actually worked. Even when I had the gravest doubts (as in Oh-my-God-there-was-not-enough-money-to-even-cut-the-losses-to-a-point-where-anyone-could-pay-them-if-we-backed-out) they pulled it together and made it work. Even when they had temporary fits of sanity and quit trying they almost all came back and saw it through. They did this despite the incredible strain on their families, their finances, and their careers. I doubt there is any way to tell just how much went into that effort and the guiding principal that it had to be a tribute worthy of RAH never wavered.

The people here telling the story are being *far* too modest. They in fact *did* pull off the Little Guy Who Saved the World in Spite of the Hordes of Orcs (and there was even a Sauron, if you think about it) and a huge deficit in time and money.

So here is the real question —

What impact did that have? Will there be a life changed (or many) because of that event? Will one more person go out and do something "Heinleinian" because they took part in something where for once they were not the only hopeless geek there who actually thought maybe the application of brains to a problem could make the world a better place —

— and then do it?

Because, isn't that the legacy we would like to give to RAH?

BILL PATTERSON: Well, yeah — that's *exactly* how it did come off, so we have a real-life demonstration that the legacy is viable and alive.

GEO RUIE: — Did I also mention I still have that last unopened bottle of Jack Daniels from Jim and Audrey's con suite (they were flying; we were driving) put away in a closet with a note attached to it explaining its provenance and directing that at my demise bottle and note be delivered to either Jim (if I proceed him) or the chairman of any 50th-increment RAI anniversary celebration?